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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Letter dated 24 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter (see annex) that represents the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the report entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", which was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and issued as document A/62/75-E/2007/13, dated 3 May 2007, under agenda item 11 of the provisional agenda of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2007, taking place in Geneva, and under agenda item 43 of the preliminary list of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources".

I would greatly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were to be circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council under agenda item 11 before the end of the general segment of the Council's substantive session of 2007.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 24 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the duty to draw your kind attention, on behalf of my Government, to the following concerns, loopholes and facts regarding chapter III of the report, dealing with the occupied Syrian Golan, in the report entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan":

1. Israel, the occupying power, has been practicing a provocative policy under which it considers the occupied Syrian Golan "as an Israeli land" since
14 December 1981, following its decision to annex it, in contravention of international law and scores of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

2. The report mentions, in paragraph 69, the building of three new Israeli settlements, but it does not mention that this is in addition to the already existing 42 Israeli settlements that were built under the gaze of the international community on the wreckage of Syrian villages, farms and orchards in the occupied Syrian Golan.

3. The report mentions, in paragraph 69, that the Interior Minister of Israel announced the intention of Israel to facilitate accelerated settlement construction near the border with Syria, but the report does not state the fact that the construction will be near the ceasefire line.

4. Regarding the Israeli settlers, Israel brings settlers from the diaspora and provides them with loans as part of its policy to change the demographic character in the occupied Syrian Golan to create new facts on the ground.

5. It is not true, as mentioned in paragraph 70, that in June 2006 the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) opened an emergency and diagnostic medical centre in Majdal Shams and provided two ambulances; in this regard, we remind you that the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, held in Geneva in 2006, failed to address those promises.

6. Regarding paragraph 71, it should be mentioned that Israel imposes Israeli curriculum on Syrian citizens and that it runs the whole educational process in the occupied Syrian Golan.

7. With regard to the discussion of water in paragraph 72, there are other water resources such as Ran Lake near the village of Masa'ada. The lake was used by the Syrian population in farming and watering live stock. Currently, and after Israel controlled Ran Lake, it sells the water of the lake to the Syrians in the Golan at prices higher than those charged to Israeli settlers. In addition to that, Israel keeps digging wells for drinking and agriculture in the inhabited lands and properties of Syrian villages and sells their water to the Syrian population at higher prices. Furthermore, the Israeli occupying authorities prevent Syrians from drilling wells.

8. In paragraph 72, it is true that ICRC helped in transporting 10,000 tons of Arab-produced Golani apples to the Syrian market. However, those 10,000 tons were out of the total production of more than 55,000 tons.

9. There is no mention in the report of the issue of Syrian detainees, especially the deteriorating health situation of some Syrian detainees in Israeli jails, such as Seitan Nimr-elwaly.

10. There is also no mention in the report of the burial of Israeli nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. Syrian authorities raised this important matter many times in different forums such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

11. The report omitted any reference to the effect of the threat of landmines on the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Many Syrian nationals have paid with their lives because of these landmines.

12. The report did not mention the number of the Syrian Arab population in the Golan; nor did it mention the number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that future reports should not overlook these facts and should address them as long as they represent the reality on the ground.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative